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E.O. 12958: DECL: 2020/02/19
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SUBJECT: BRAZIL: AMBASSADOR'S MEETINGS WITH SENIOR PRESIDENTIAL
ADVISORS

REF: BRASILIA 45

CLASSIFIED BY: Thomas A. Shannon, Ambassador, State, Embassy
Brasilia; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

11. (C) Summary. During separate meetings at the Presidential Palace, Foreign Policy Advisor Marco Aurelio Garcia and Presidential Chief of Staff Gilberto Carvalho discussed with Ambassador Shannon their interest in working together on a range of regional and global issues, including Honduras, Venezuela, Haiti, and non-proliferation issues. Garcia and Carvalho were impressed with the wide range of high-level USG visits to Brazil over the next month, and were eager at the prospect of increased dialogue with the USG on critical issues. Garcia was interested in finding a strategy to rehabilitate former Honduran President Manuel Zelaya; he also reacted favorably to suggestions that the United States is open to discussion with the Government of Venezuela if the right interlocutors could be found. Carvalho was particularly interested in discussing long-range cooperation in Haiti. End summary.

Honduras

12. (C) Marco Aurelio Garcia, Lula's highly influential Foreign Policy Advisor, steered the conversation in his February 8 meeting toward Latin America, his primary focus. He opened with the need for a "certain rehabilitation" of former President Manuel Zelaya, which he did not define in detail but characterized as "a little more than amnesty." Garcia recognized that Zelaya is essentially conservative but argued that, as a catalyst of a popular movement in Honduras, resentment regarding his dismissal will continue and can potentially destabilize Honduras long-term if it is not addressed. In response to comments by the Ambassador that President Lobo is open to re-establishing normal diplomatic channels with Brazil, Garcia took on a conciliatory tone and acknowledged that some degree of communication with Lobo - "an exchange of notes" - has already taken place.

Venezuela

13. (C) Garcia characterized Venezuela as having deep domestic economic problems, particularly with regard to energy supply. He believed that President Chavez would be forced to step back substantially from the "foreign policy of oil" in order to attend to domestic concerns. He emphasized that Lula tells Chavez regularly that Venezuela "needs to escape from oil." Brazil is willing to help, Garcia said, by providing agricultural assistance to the GOV and support in building Venezuela's hydroelectric capacity, among other areas.

¶4. (C) Ambassador Shannon said that Venezuela's problems were increasingly intractable, and that the internal domestic problems they were generating were pushing Chavez toward more authoritarianism and repression. He noted that our efforts at outreach had all been rebuffed by Chavez, and that the lack of any reliable interlocutors made dialogue with Venezuela almost impossible. Garcia asked if the United States was still interested in dialogue. The Ambassador said yes. Garcia was visibly intrigued by this, indicating that Brazil could be of assistance in this area.

Bolivia, Colombia, Chile

¶5. (C) Garcia spoke favorably about Bolivia's economy and government, and made the case that President Morales is more moderate than his words or image indicate. He downplayed any current tension between Bolivia and Brazil on hydrocarbons or other issues and suggested that Bolivia under Morales should not be viewed as a concern for either the U.S. or Brazil. The Ambassador noted that the United States and Bolivia had negotiated a draft bilateral framework agreement, but that the Morales government was unprepared to move forward on the agreement at this time. On Chile, Garcia opined that the victory of Sebastian Pinera opens the door for the right to take power, and that he foresees serious problems between Chile and Bolivia. He conceded that Colombian President Uribe will win again if he runs for re-election and that former Defense Minister Juan Manuel Santos will probably win if Uribe doesn't run.

Haiti

¶6. (C) Haiti featured prominently in the Ambassador's meeting February 9 with Lula's personal Chief of Staff, Gilberto Carvalho. (Note: Carvalho, who has been Lula's Chief of Staff ever since entering the Presidency in 2003, normally focuses largely on Lula's schedule and on domestic political concerns. End note.) Speaking in terms that much resembled an earlier meeting between Ambassador Shannon and MRE Secretary General Patriota (reftel), Carvalho and the Ambassador talked about Haiti as an opportunity to provide a template for future joint U.S.-Brazil assistance efforts in the region, and also as a model for future UN post-disaster efforts. Carvalho agreed with the need for the United States and Brazil to prioritize plans for sustainable reconstruction strategy in the next stage of Haiti's recovery, and on the need to use security efforts to advance the development strategy in Haiti.

Visits and Coordination

¶7. (C) Carvalho and Garcia both spoke briefly about President Lula's upcoming international travel, including:

- Feb 22-25 (Cuba, Mexico-for the Summit of Latin American and Caribbean nations-El Salvador, Haiti)
- Mar 13-15 (Israel, Palestine, Jordan)
- Apr 13-14 (United States-for the Global Nuclear Security Summit)
- Mid-May (tentatively Iran, Russia, Spain)

Each responded favorably to suggestions of increased communication between the U.S. and Brazil at the executive level - including communication between President Lula and President Obama - both before and after official trips. Both were also impressed at the broad range of high-level USG visitors to Brazil planned for the next month.

SHANNON